

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

H. RES. 268, REAFFIRMING THE UNITED STATES COMMITMENT TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT THROUGH DIRECT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS

**HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian plan to unilaterally declare statehood targets the core underpinning of the peace process—the principle of mutual recognition.

In their tactics and their tone, Palestinian leaders have proclaimed that seeking to delegitimize Israel is more important to them than a prosperous future for their own people. It is a travesty and a tragedy.

To reiterate what President Obama made clear in his May 19 speech: “Palestinians will never realize their independence by denying the right of Israel to exist.”

For all the terrorist attacks that have claimed thousands of Israeli lives, for all the domestic trauma and security risks Israel undertook in its withdrawals from Gaza and Lebanon, for all the settlement freezes and stalled talks, Israel has always returned to the negotiating table in faith that a peace agreement is possible. But unilateral Palestinian declaration of statehood is the one thing from which the peace process cannot recover.

What will be left to negotiate? And at this point who will be there to negotiate with? The PLO? Hamas? A “technocratic” unity government that has no political standing?

If the Palestinian leadership is serious about statehood and about entering the United Nations as a responsible, sovereign nation, it should drop its preconditions, reenter direct talks and recognize Israel as a Jewish State.

I strongly support H. Res. 268, which reaffirms Administration policy and previous congressional resolutions on this issue. With this vote, we must redouble efforts to work with our allies and the international community to pressure the Palestinian leadership to change course towards a just and lasting peace.

HONORING GAL SITTY FOR HIS OUTSTANDING HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF KIDNAPPED ISRAELI SOLDIER GILAD SHALIT

**HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of an outstanding resident of the district I proudly represent, Gal Sitty. Mr. Sitty has worked hard to raise awareness of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit's plight and the ongoing effort to secure his release.

Mr. Sitty launched a successful effort to raise \$10,000 for the placement of a billboard near the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The billboard featuring a picture of Gilad Shalit will ensure that the captured soldier is not forgotten. It also encourages UN leaders to assist in facilitating his release.

Mr. Sitty was motivated to undertake this effort because he understands that during the five years since Shalit's capture, Gilad and his family have been suffering and living a nightmare. Mr. Sitty's efforts have undoubtedly provided Gilad Shalit's family comfort because they know that the American people stand behind them ready to help.

I commend Mr. Sitty for his advocacy on Gilad Shalit's behalf and thank him for his outstanding efforts to keep the world focused on this tragedy. Mr. Sitty's hard work plays an important role in the effort to return Gilad home to his family.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following article published in the May 8th addition of the Jerusalem Post—“Angeleno Launches Drive for Shalit Billboard Near UN”, and I ask that it be published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Jerusalem Post, May 8, 2011]

ANGELENO LAUNCHES DRIVE FOR SHALIT BILLBOARD NEAR UN

(By Debra Kamin)

June 25 of this year will mark five years in captivity for Gilad Shalit, and one American is determined to make sure that this anniversary does not go unnoticed.

Gal Sitty, a 28-year-old Los Angeles native, has started a campaign on epicstep.com to fund and erect a billboard near the Manhattan headquarters of the United Nations imploring leaders to take steps to free the captive soldier.

“In [the past] five years I've gone to grad school, had numerous jobs, spent many holidays with my family, had good times with friends and so forth,” Sitty said to The Jerusalem Post when asked about his motivations. “Meanwhile, Gilad Shalit and his family have had none of that. They have been suffering, living a nightmare.”

Epicstep was founded earlier this year by Lev Reys and brothers Gene and Eugene Vekslar. The site works as a fundraising platform for creating billboards—users choose the issue they feel compelled to promote and supporters log on and donate until the final cost, which varies per billboard but for Sitty's campaign is \$10,000, is reached. Supporters' credit cards are not charged until the fundraising goal is reached, so if the campaign to create a billboard fails, no pledges are lost.

Sitty was born in Israel and raised in a Hebrew-speaking home. He is quick to admit that this is an issue that is close to his heart. “The recent Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement makes no mention of Gilad Shalit. This means that Fatah and the Palestinian Authority are now complicit in this crime,” he said. “I think getting this billboard up keeps the pressure on . . . leaders of the world to not overlook this human tragedy.”

Sitty, who holds a master's degree in public policy, still lives in Los Angeles, where he

works as a researcher for the Broad Foundation. He selected New York City as the site for his billboard, however, because he believes that no one needs to hear his message more than the delegates at the United Nations.

“Soon the world's diplomats will be assembling at the UN to discuss recognition of a Palestinian state and it is very important that we remind them of Shalit so that the whole world does not become complicit in such crimes,” he said. “If the UN endorses a Palestinian state with Hamas in the government, then the UN indirectly endorses crimes against humanity and puts many more at risk of being kidnapped by terrorist organizations. We cannot allow this to happen.”

What the actual impact of a placard bearing Shalit's face will be remains to be seen. But Sitty is pragmatic when he describes his motivations. “I know that I don't have the power to actually free him,” he said of Shalit, “but by getting this billboard up I think it keeps the pressure on the policy makers.” And while Gilad will not know about the campaign, Sitty is also eager to help two other important figures—Noam and Aviva Shalit.

“I hope that many people, Israelis and non-Israelis, Jews and non-Jews, from all over the world contribute to this campaign and show the Shalit family that we haven't forgotten them, haven't forgotten their son, and will never forget about their suffering,” Sitty said. “We will continue to stand beside them and do whatever we can to help them.”

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MRS. ANNA ALICE OMILANOWSKI

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mrs. Anna Alice Omilanowski who passed away on July 9, 2011.

Mrs. Omilanowski was the daughter of Joseph and Bernice Lewanski, who emigrated from Poland and passed through Ellis Island. She was the oldest of nine children, and grew up on East 40th Street and Superior Avenue.

Anna was a hard worker and took great pride in her work, especially when she worked in a factory that assembled torpedoes during World War II. Later, she applied her strong work ethic to a variety of other positions, including washing dishes at Pete's Wayside Inn, cleaning Parma Schools and working for Broadview Savings and Loan.

She married, Chester, a concentration camp survivor, on June 14, 1958 at St. Casimir Church in Cleveland. Together they raised five children. Mrs. Omilanowski always felt that her most important achievement was having her children by her side.

Anna was involved in her children's activities and was an avid bowler and card player. I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Omilanowski during the 1970s on more than one occasion at card parties and was always moved by her kindness.

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